

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /110 W
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R 031125Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8058
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 3538

DEPT PASS HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MOPS, SU, ET
SUBJECT: REPORTER JOHN DUGGAN ON ERITREA

1. CORRESPONDENT JOHN DUGGAN TOLD EMBOFF OF COMMENTS
RECENTLY GIVEN HIM BY ERITREAN STAFFS OF ELF, EPLF, AND TPLF
OFFICES IN KHARTOUM. DUGGAN LEAVES KHARTOUM AUGUST 3 TO
TRAVEL THROUGH ENTIRE ERITREAN-HELD TERRITORY ON SEVERAL
MONTHS TRIP PRE-ARRANGED WITH ALL MAJOR LIBERATION GROUPS.
HE HAS STOPPED FILING STORIES TO PACIFIC NEWS SERVICE AND
OTHER CLIENTS ON ADVICE OF SUDAN DEPUTY PUBLIC SECURITY
ORGANIZATION CHIEF KHALIFA KARRAR TO ENSURE HIS ACCEPTABILITY
TO ALL FACTIONS IN ERITREA.

2. ELF FORCES ARE HOLDING AT SCIAMBEQO (1458N 035752E)
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SOUTHEAST OF BARENTU. DUGGAN INTENDS TO INVESTIGATE
FUTURE STATUS OF ELF IN VIEW OF HARD KNOCKS RECENTLY
RECEIVED, BUT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT ELF FORCES HAVE IN
GENERAL WITHDRAWN AHEAD OF ETHIOPIANS WITHOUT SUFFERING
SEVERE LOSSES OF MEN AND EQUIPMENT. EPLF IN KHARTOUM
ACCUSES ELF OF DISSOLUTION BUT CANNOT CITE INSTANCES
WHICH WOULD CONFIRM THIS CRITICISM. TESSENEI WAS EXAMPLE

ONLY OF RAPID WITHDRAWAL IN GOOD ORDER. ELF BELIEVES EPLF WAS TOO QUICK TO SWITCH TO MOBILE GUERRILLA OPERATIONS, THUS PERMITTING ETHIOPIANS TO CONCENTRATE ON ELF. DESPITE MUTUAL CRITICISM, ELF AND EPLF MAINTAIN RELATIONS, ENCOURAGED BY OBVIOUS ETHIOPIAN PLOY OF FOCUSING ON ELF TO CAUSE DISSENSION BETWEEN TWO ORGANIZATIONS.

3. IN DUGGAN'S OPINION, EPLF SUPPORTERS AND FIGHTERS ARE NOT MARXISTS. HOWEVER, CADRES ARE MARXISTS IN PRIMITIVE FASHION. TRAINING SCHOOL IS OFF-LIMITS TO OUTSIDERS. ISAIAS AFEWORK IS MARXIST BUT RAMADAN MOHAMED NUR PERHAPS IS NOT. BASIC POLITICAL EDUCATION BY EPLF LEARNING WHO ENEMIES ARE (LANDLORDS, CAPITALISTS) AND WHO FRIENDS ARE (POOR, LEFTISTS). NATIONALIST HISTORY IS TAUGHT AFTERWARD. ONLY LATER COMES MARXIST IDEOLOGY WHICH IS MORE MAO THAN LENIN. EPLF DIRECTION AND INTENT IS NATIONAL MARXISM.

4. EPLF STRATEGY IS BASED ON ASSUMPTION THAT ONLY EPLF WILL COUNT IN LONG RUN. ISAIAS SAID LEADERSHIP KNEW LAST YEAR DURING PEAK OF LIBERATION SUCCESSES THAT "OFFENSIVE DEFENSE" WOULD BE NECESSARY TO COUNTER INEVITABLE ETHIOPIAN MAJOR OFFENSIVE IN 1978. EPLF HAS WITHDRAWN FROM MASSAWA TO BEGINNING OF ESCARPMENT ON ROAD TO ASMARA, FROM AREA NORTHEAST OF ADIGRAT AND FROM DECAMERE. IN LONG RUN, EPLF HOPES TO DEFEND (1) POSITIONS
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NORTH OF AGORDAT AFTER ELF HAS LOST THAT TOWN, (2) MASSAWA TO ASMARA ROAD, (3) LINE NORTH OF ASMARA AND (4) APPROACHES TO KEREN. IF DRIVEN OUT OF KEREN, WHICH THEY PLAN TO DEFEND AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, EPLF WILL FALL BACK TO MOUNTAINS IN NORTH. ALL AREAS SLATED AS FINAL DEFENSIVE AREA (1 TO 4) ARE SUITABLE FOR GUERRILLA DEFENSE. EPLF WILL ALSO CONTINUE GUERRILLA OPERATIONS ON ASMARA TO AGORDAT ROAD TO INTERDICT THAT ROAD. TPLF IS HOLDING AGI-ADI (1330N 3906N) AND NEBELE AREA (NOT TOWN) NEAR ADIGRAT. NEBELE AREA WAS MARKED ON DUGGAN'S SKETCH MAP.

5. ERITREANS IN KHARTOUM TELL ALL COMERS THAT WAR STARTED 17 YEARS AGO OVER ISSUE OF FEDERATION WITH ETHIOPIA. IF THEY WOULD ACCEPT FEDERATION, THERE WOULD BE NO WAR. NOW THEY WANT TO GO "BEYOND FEDERATION" WHICH MEANS INDEPENDENCE. NONE OF THEM ADMIT TO CONSIDERING ANY COMPROMISES.
BOGOSIAN

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED HORN OF AFRICA COLLECTIVE.

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NNN

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